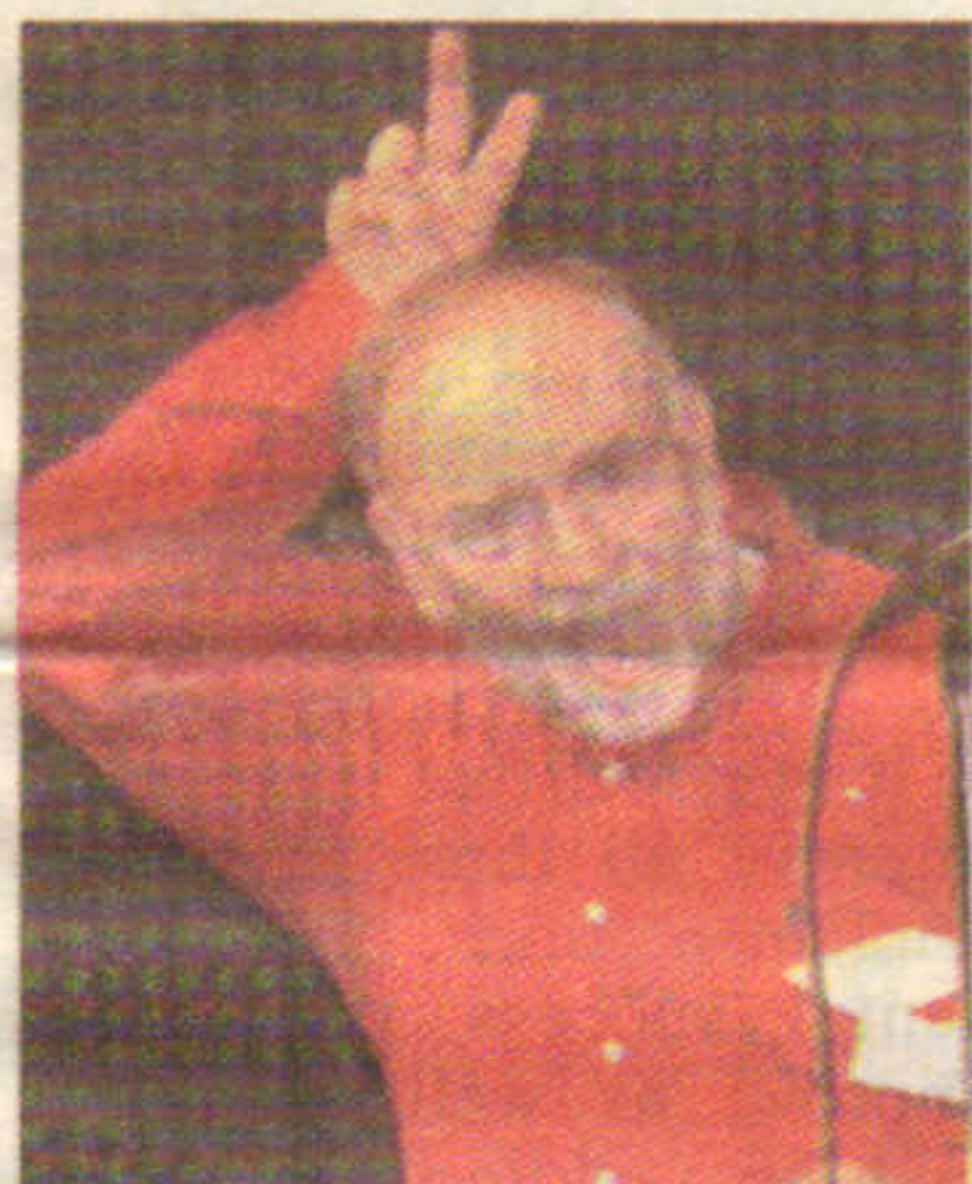


Allen Mallory will make you glad you gave up ten bucks

By Meredith Sayers

"Laughter is the best medicine." It's a saying we have all heard. However, not only is laughter the best medicine, it is the best way to learn. Allen Mallory will be combining laughter and learning in his comedy routine "Laugh and Learn" in the Bean-Brown Theatre on March 13 at 7 p.m.



Dr. Allen Mallory assumes his signature pose on the stage of the Bean-Brown Theatre during last year's benefit performance.

Although Mallory has performed his comedy routines across the country for more than twelve years, he has only been performing "Laugh and Learn" at

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Page 2**

QEP: It's all about accredita- tion—and getting better

By Keith Huffman



Shelton State's QEP program is starting to generate a little interest among the student population at the college.

Every 10 years, Shelton State's reputation as a highly qualified institution fit for instructing and furnishing students with academic as well as technical degrees is put to the test when it must become reaccredited, or approved, by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Shelton State is again set to undergo this process next year.

Such approval is of utmost importance to all colleges worldwide, for without it their academic reputations are impugned, and they also forfeit eligibility to receive several much-needed assets, like federal grants.

To become re-accredited, an institution's every program is subject to inspection by SACS officials, from its to each individual instructor's overall quali-

See QEP Page 2

Shelton's singers and actors say: *Let's put on a show...*

By Stephanie James



Music instructor Glinda Blackshear and theatre instructor Michael Carr will lend their years of experience to the production "Broadway memories and Melodies," a student show that should present a boffo night of entertainment in the Bean-Brown Theatre on Feb. 29 and March 1.



The Shelton Performing and Fine Arts Division will showcase their spring production called "Broadway Memories and Melodies." The spring showcase is under the direction of Michael Carr and Glinda Blackshear.

Blackshear was excited by the variety of musical fare in the offing. "The Shelton Singers will be presenting a medley of songs from *The Phantom of the Opera* by Andrew Lloyd Webber, as well as hit tunes from classic shows such as *Gypsy*, *Forty-Second Street*

and *Sweet Charity*, to modern shows such as *Wicked*, *Hairspray* and *Spamalot*.

The entire choir will participate, but the following students will be featured soloists: Christine Fanning, Katelyn Perkins, Amy Todhunter, Micklynn Kannapel, Marlin Ward, Lee Johnson, and Ernest Cannon. Other supporting soloists are Charmin Richardson, Andrew Hall, Alysia Nailor, Rachel Edwards, Chance Blake, Brandon Connor, Elliott

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Inside The Courier

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• Bucs pitcher Justin Hollis catches us up on his own victories, as well as his team's...Page 3

• A special sports treat in this issue's Shel-Shots...Page 6



Mallory from Page 1

Shelton for three years.

All of Mallory's shows at Shelton have been sold out, and if this year's performance is sold out as well, "Laugh and Learn" will have raised nearly 10,000 dollars in four years, with the proceeds going to the Alumni Association's Scholarships for Adult Students.

When Ronda Shirley, director of alumni affairs, asked Mallory to perform his comedy at Shelton as a fundraiser for this scholarship, he saw it as a chance to help students better their education while giving his curious current students a

chance to see him perform, as many were eager to do.

Mallory said he feels it is a great compliment when students and members of the faculty pay to hear him talk, when they can hear him daily for free.

A comedy club owner in Charlotte, N.C. once told Mallory, "I've been trying to figure you out. You remind me of Bill Cosby." Both Cosby and Mallory's jokes are in the form of stories. "That might have been the best compliment I ever had," said Mallory. During his routine, Mallory tells humorous stories of children, and for the show at Shelton he incorporates stories from his college days and more recent stories taken from his time teaching human growth and development.

Although Mallory says

he's "no spring chicken" and stopped making his summer forays into the country's comedy clubs three years ago, he occasionally does a one night performance on a Friday or Saturday, in addition to his act at Shelton.

"I think it's neat that people bring their family and friends with them to the show," said Mallory. "They contribute to the scholarship fund and have a good time." The fact he is able to perform at Shelton and the students and faculty want to attend make this a memorable performance to Mallory.

Mallory said he "gets a kick" out of performing at Shelton and hopes he is able to continue supporting the Alumni Association's Scholarships for Adult Students by performing this show in the future.

QEP

from Page 1

cation to teach.

In addition, an institution must also now show it has satisfactorily improved at least one area of its operations.

college President Mark Heinrich and Dean of Instructional Services Camille Cochrane.

Regarding the present topic of concern, Wright said the team, or QEP committee, has decided upon three "implementations," or key points, that deal direct-



Inhalation therapy instructor Bruce Spruell chats with President Mark Heinrich just before the QEP Kickoff presentation at the Fredd Campus.

To help prepare for this critical process, Shelton State launched its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) in 2006. The topic, "Distance Education," was eventually chosen in 2007. The topic was further narrowed down to "Improving Student Success in Online Classes" by the QEP Action Team in January 2008, according to computer science instructor and QEP Director Darrell Wright.

Consisting of a combination of faculty, staff members and students, the QEP Action Team also includes newly appointed

ly with online courses: 1) student preparation; 2) faculty preparation; and 3) course design.

"When it comes down to it, we feel that if we can improve all three of these implementations, then students' success rate will improve as well," Wright said, also adding that since last December, the Shelton State website began posting a blog aimed at encouraging students as well as faculty to input their comments or

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The Shelton State Association of Nursing Students

is sponsoring a
Blood Drive

When: February 26 and February 27, 2008
9:00 am until 3:00 pm each day

Where: "D" rooms on the Martin Campus
United Blood Services will be conducting the blood drive.

United Blood Services is a local organization, contributing more than 80% of its blood donations to DCH Regional Medical Centers

Faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in this important student sponsored activity.

The Shelton State Courier is brought to its readers by the academic and extracurricular programs of Shelton State Community College.

Shelton State Courier

Editor
Matt Celozzi
Staff Writer
Keith Huffman
Staff Writers
Members of
MCM-102 Class

Web Developer
Elizabeth Wiley

Publisher
Dr. Jim Kenny

The Shelton State Courier is a campus newspaper, written and produced with the help of students.

Among its functions, it is intended as a vehicle for student expression, and all students are urged to participate with submissions of written and artistic material.

The college seeks to fulfill the statement for academic freedom in working with the students in the pro-

duction of this paper.

All publications are subject to review by the Publications Action Group, which has been delegated the responsibility to review all college publications for content and accuracy.

The Courier is an equal opportunity employer and student organization. All students are encouraged to participate.

Baseball is back — and so is Justin Hollis

On the field he was dominating and respectful to the game. Off the field he was kind and thoughtful to all those around him. He is Justin Hollis, a boy from a small town known as Selma, Ala. Hollis had his whole life ahead of him when his world was flipped upside down.

Hollis was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma. Hodgkin's lymphoma is a type of cancer that usually appears in the lymph nodes of the neck. He was diagnosed in December of 2006. His love of the game would have to wait.

The road was long and hard for Hollis. He had treatment every two weeks at the cancer center in his home town of Selma. His treatments were five hours long.

During these treatments Hollis would get medicine pumped through his body by way of a port that had been surgically installed in his chest. One of the nurses made the comment to him one time about how if the medicine going through his body was to leak out onto the floor it would eat the paint off of it.

Hollis would sit there with strangers, some who he new from interaction and some he did not know at all, but they all had one thing in common; they had cancer.

Hollis would sit there and think to himself: "Am I every going to be the same person I was?" "Will I be able to go back onto that field and perform like I had before?"

The answers to these question would have to wait for a year until he could step foot back onto that field at Shelton State Community College, the place were he felt the most comfortable and confident of his abilities.

Justin Hollis won his battle with cancer and is now back where he belongs with his friends on the baseball field. Hollis has been cancer free for about eight months now and is looking like his old self again. This semester, Hollis will cover the baseball team for the Courier.

By Justin Hollis

The Bucs started red hot this season starting out at an impressive 6-0 record. This record was thanks to good pitching, solid defense and bats that couldn't miss the ball even if they tried. The Bucs were lead by All-Americans

Jonathan Smart and Clay Jones.

Although the All-Americans did their part, it was a team effort to be 6-0. Corbet Procter, Tyler Horne and JJ Baswell were the big sticks in the line-up providing that pop every good team needs.

Justin Bussey and Russ Tibbs look like they both know what the other is thinking the way they turn double plays in the middle of the infield.

The outfield is anchored by speedy sophomore Cal Tinsley and the cannon right arm of freshman Justin Diliberto. Every good team knows you can win the game in the first inning, but you can also let one slip away in the eighth and ninth. How do stop this from happening? A lights out, blow-it-by-you bullpen.

The bullpen is a three headed monster led by Adam Scott. The other two are freshman Brett Whitaker and the country boy from Bibb County, sophomore Frank Mitchell. Maybe the Bucs can repeat last year's impressive state victory and World Series birth. One thing for sure it will take hard work, dedication, and focus to return to the top of the heap this year.

Feb 1- **Alabama Southern**- Shelton wins in nine innings 3-2

Feb 2- **Alabama Southern**- Shelton wins in nine innings 3-0

Feb 8- **SW Tennessee**- Shelton wins a barn burner. Shelton exploded for seven runs in the ninth inning to capture their third win of the season.

Feb 9- **Cleveland State**- Another win for the Bucs as they come out on top of this up and down battle 7-5

Feb10- **Okaloosa-Walton**- The most exiting game of the year so far. A very evenly matched game as it took more than nine innings to decide this one. It took ten innings before the Bucs mounted a rally and took the win 5-4

Feb13- **Okaloosa-Walton**- seems like every time we play O-W we get a good game. We played ten innings again, but this time it was a little more exciting. Shelton was losing in the ninth inning and were down to its last at-bat. Shelton mounted a rally of walks and singles. Michael Burchfield provided the clutch hit that the Bucs needed for the win in ten innings: 14-13.

Undefeated in league play and at home, Lady Bucs have scary look in their patched eyes

What is it like to be a lady pirate? To represent the fairer sex, yet know you're stone-cold killers?

Ask a member of this year's Shelton State women's basketball team. For they have mercilessly slain all who have entered their domain this year and last.

The last execution was the most troublesome, though.

Wallace of Hanceville would not go gently into that good night on Feb. 21 and kept the contest in question until the end.

With much attending publicity would the Lady Lions pull the upset and stop the Buc streak?

Nah!

Once again, nobody was able

to come into the pirates' den and still their treasure hoard of victories.

The Lady Buccaneers after that hard-fought victory are at 24-4 on the year and have a bloody glint in their eyes heading into the post season.

Three sophomores guards, Ayla Guzzado, Caroline Powell and Lauren Tucker, remained undefeated at home in their careers after the victory on sophomore night.

This merry band of Buccaneers hope to take their savage brand of cutthroat play into an unprecedented third straight trip to the national tournament in Kansas in March.

On the upswing, basketball Bucs nearly knock off undefeated Hanceville

By Todd Eakin

The Shelton State Basketball team is 19-9 and coming off back to back wins in mid February.

But on Feb. 21 the team couldn't quite finish against highly favored Wallace State-Hanceville (28-0), falling 85-82.

Coach Barry Mohun's team is trying to get his team going in the right direction as the ACCC tournament draws near. The Bucs's record in the league is 7-7 while they went 12-2 out of conference. Shelton actually started off 15-2, but has fallen lately down the stretch, going 4-7.

Shelton State is second in the league in scoring with 86 points per game. Jason Swanson, a sophomore forward, leads the league in rebounds per game, averaging just over 11. He also is sixth in the conference in scoring with 16 a game.

He had 9 boards on Thursday night in the loss along with 15 points. Brandon Williams led all scorers with 20. Unfortunately, the Buccaneers could not contain

Wallace's J. Borum, giving up 25 points.

Shelton State and Wallace-Hanceville went neck and neck throughout the 40 minutes of play. They swapped leads almost the whole game until Shelton was given two free throws from a technical foul late in the game. They led by three until two late threes by Hanceville in the final minute halted the Bucs from pulling off the biggest upset of the season.

Even though the game put them at even in the conference, they can take the season by winning the last two. They are 13-4 at Umphrey Center and one of their final two games is at home.

After the game, Coach Mohun told the *Courier*, "I'm really proud of the team, they played hard. Our guys gave us the best chance to win and they gave it their all."

"I really feel good about these last couple games. With the tournament weeks away I think we have a really good chance to see what we are made of."

T.T. arrives with *Dearly Departed*

By Meredith Sayers

Shelton State's Bean-Brown Theatre, in cooperation with Theatre Tuscaloosa, was host to the play "Dearly Departed" from Feb. 8-17.

This laugh-out-loud comedy about a family's skeletons being exposed while preparing for the head of the family's funeral boasted a full audience at each performance who honored the cast with a standing ovation.

"I thought the play was hilarious. The actors did a great job," said Holly Willis, a student at Shelton who attended the play on Friday Feb. 15. "I wouldn't have been able to keep a straight face during some of the jokes. I don't know how they did it."

Tina Fitch, the play's director, said the cast rehearsed for about 5 weeks prior to opening night. Fitch said the approach isn't much different for comedies and dramas—"you have to work hard either way."

Fitch said comedies, like "Dearly Departed," tend to have bigger crowds than a drama. "It's harder to get people to come see a drama than it is a comedy. It's unfortunate because they are really good, but we expect that going in."

Fitch said she doesn't get nervous about the audience's reaction to a comedy because she's "done this a long time." She does tend to lose perspective, she said, so she appreciates when other people with a fresh perspective watch the play and tell her their opinion.

Fitch said after a play has run, she measures her success on how much the audience liked the performance and if she and the cast did everything they could to make the play entertaining and accurate. "I like to hear a good buzz in the public," she said.

The next play held at the Bean-Brown Theatre will be a comedy titled "Moonlight and Magnolias" about the writing of the classic novel *Gone With the Wind*, which will run May 2-11.

Shelton's own Syble Coats part of Penick celebration

By Keith Huffman

After 54 years of teaching the art of piano performance,

Distinguished University of Alabama professor of piano Amanda W. Penick will be the esteemed guest of honor during a concert to be held March 2 at the Moody Concert Hall at 2 p.m. in celebration of her long and dedicated career. Admission to the event is free and open to the public.

Among the 11 of Penick's former students that she herself has selected to perform includes Shelton State piano instructor Syble Coats. "I'm just very honored to be on the program," Coats said during a Feb. 21 interview. "Mrs. Penick is a marvelous teacher and mentor."

No stranger to Shelton, Penick, who was recently named the 2008 "Teacher of the Year" at UA by the Music Teachers National Association, often performs in Shelton's weekly "Terrific Tuesday Concert Series."

For Penick's celebration concert, six performers will be playing in duets, or two at a keyboard, and five will perform as solos.

Besides Coats, the other performers include 2007 Van Clibur Amateur winner Drew Mays; UA professional accompanist and class piano instructor Pam Gordon; three-time Carnegie Hall recitalist and University of Montevallo professor of piano Anthony Pattin; Cynthia Perry, also a professor of piano at UM; Sneed Community College

Chairman of the piano department Melinda Brooks; Stanford University piano faculty member Ron Shinn; Huntsville area independent piano teachers Lynn Fetzner Faulkner, Frances Schwemmer and Melinda Parrish; and Penick's own daughter-in-law, Pam Penick, who is a well-known pianist and director of the Tuscaloosa Arts and Humanities Council.

"It's going to be so exciting to share the stage with my colleagues for this special occasion for Mrs. Penick," Coats said, adding that she knows each performer professionally. "It's an event no one needs to miss, especially if you're a music lover, or if you like fine music."

**SHELTON STATE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
NIGHT OF COMEDY**

featuring
DR. ALLEN MALLORY

THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2008
7:00 PM

DOOR PRIZES


BEAN-BROWN THEATRE
TICKETS \$10 PER PERSON

ALL PROCEEDS GO
TO SUPPORT THE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION'S
SCHOLARSHIPS FOR
ADULT STUDENTS

TICKETS MAY BE PURCHASED
IN THE ALUMNI OFFICE
SECOND FLOOR
STUDENT ORGANIZATION
CENTER, ROOM 2411D
MARTIN CAMPUS
PHONE 391-2252

SHELTON STATE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Celebrating
54 YEARS of TEACHING

A
Heritage
of
Excellence



Amanda Penick

Alumni Piano Recital

March 2, 2008

Moody Concert Hall

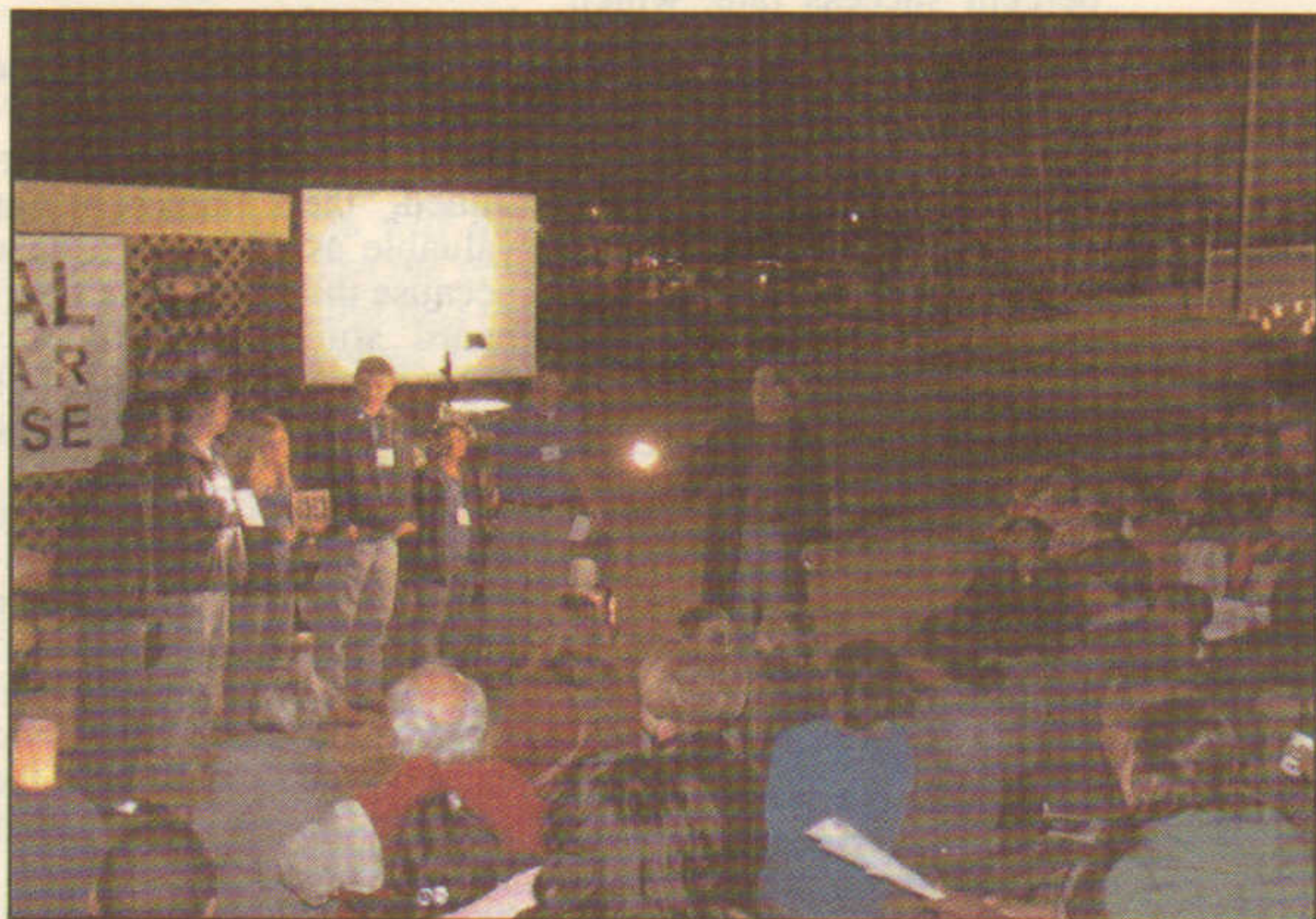
2:00 p.m.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

NO ADMISSION CHARGED

Left to right:
Drew Mays
Pam Gordon
Anthony Pattin
Syble Coats
Melinda Brooks
Lynn Fetzner Faulkner
Cynthia Perry
Pam Penick
Frances Schwemmer
Melinda Parrish
Ron Shinn

Shel-Shots



Astronomy Instructor Dr. Lee Albritton put on a bit of a show for a very large crowd during the recent total lunar eclipse. His presentation at the Fredd Campus produced a lot of celestial light on an otherwise dark evening.

Photo by Rachel Ross



Bucs catcher Kayla Gordy connects for a 3-run home-run on a cold afternoon at the Shelton softball field on Feb. 23.



Don't be jealous. But this bucolic view of horses grazing in the field across from Room 2319 is a view often enjoyed by the Courier staff.



Transfer Day at Shelton State was a sparsely attended event this year, though the students who did take the opportunity were able to learn what's available from the score of colleges present.



Bucs infielder Justin Bussey attempts to turn a double-play during a recent game against Okaloosa-Walton.

Photos by Donna Tinsley



Tyler Horne hits the dirt at home plate during fast-and-furious action at the Buccaneer vs. Okaloosa-Walton game in Florida.

Photos by Donna Tinsley

News From Phi Theta Kappa



Phi Theta Kappa 2008 Spring Induction

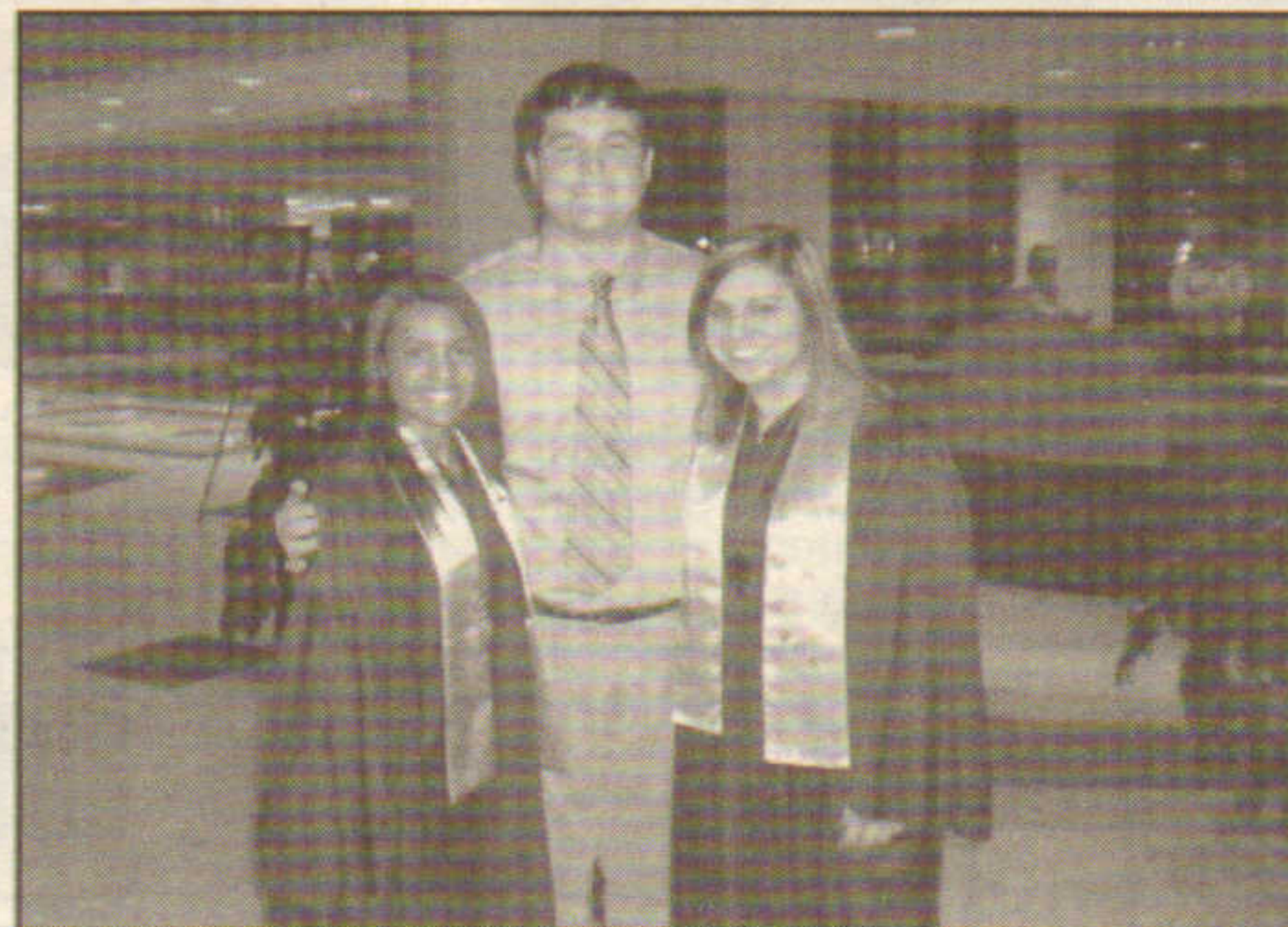
The Alpha Epsilon Iota chapter of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society held its Spring 2008 Induction on Monday, Feb. 11, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in the Atrium on the Martin Campus. The inductees along with their friends and relatives were greeted by Advisor, Claire Brock. The invocation was given by Dean Tommy Taylor and introduction of the speaker was done by Dean Camille Cochrane. Dr. Mark Heenrich, the newly named president of Shelton State Community College, spoke to the group. Julia Speights, Advisor, closed with remarks regarding membership and invited guests to a brief reception.

The following students were inducted:

Paul Collins Espy,
Joshua Allen Fields,

Richard Brandon Hall,
Misty M. Jones,

Victoria A. Ashley,
Troy Adam Bailey,
Mallory B. Banks,
Kayla Leigh Beams,
Kristen Nichole Bell,
Kayla Nichole Benton,
Kellye Michelle Blanchar,
Kimberly D. Bolding,
Andrew Bowers,
Victoria Corley,
Amanda Jean Corkerin,
Andrew Christopher Duncan,



New PTK inductee Justin Grimes (Center) is congratulated by current officers Laci Crimm and Hannah Howell. About 30 Shelton students were inducted into the international honorary and enjoyed a brief reception.

Leigh

Carl P. Frank,
Joshua Ben Garner,
Camille McKissick Gibson,
Justin Stewart Grimes,

Tillman Sterling,
Matthew Aaron Wolfenbarger

Kristen Michelle Knarr,
Bradley Kenneth Lee,
Ambuir Diane Morrison,
Stanley Edwards Oden,
Ashley Jean Orr,
Rebecca Doratha Pekera,
Tony Harper Randolph,
Konica S. Shannon,
Julia L. Shirley,
Edward

QEP from Page 2

suggestions for bettering online courses.

"It's very common for online classes to have a 50 percent success rate, which is a fairly high failure rate," he said of the issue's present standing. "Furthermore, our online success rate is not where Shelton State thinks it should be."

Given the relatively low completion rate, Wright said the solution to improving online courses is a matter of "redesigning a medium," as in the exact manner in which society upgraded "from books to radio to TV."

"The challenge for online education is to design an environment that will work with the same success rate, or better degree of success, than traditional class formats," Wright explained.

"With the use of the blog, we can receive much-needed input from instructors who have continually

taught online, instructors who have taught but no longer teach online, and those who have never taught online. So this includes recommendations from both academic and technical faculty, plus the library and representatives in student services as well.

"In the case of those instructors who haven't taught online," Wright continued, "their input is just as valuable as those who have because they may have overheard students' comments regarding theirs or a friend's experience with online courses."

To find out more about the QEP or to relay suggestions toward improving online courses, simply visit the college website at www.sheltonstate.edu and click on the QEP link on the site's homepage; another link afterward provides further instructions on how to post a personal comment. All blogs concerning the matter will be well-appreciated and taken into high consideration.



While an Ambassador watches over the proceedings, computer science instructor and QEP director Darrell Wright (L) waits a few moments to drop one of his cherished puns as President Heinrich introduces the QEP concept of improving distance learning.

American Heart Association Heart Walk

This year Shelton State Community College is involved in the American Heart Association's Heart Walk. The event will be held March 8th on The University of Alabama's recreational fields. The time of the event is set for 9:00am, and it last about 90 minutes. In the next several days someone will be asking each of you to contribute for both a financial donation and to participate in person as a walker.

You don't have to contribute, but your peers are...
so why not you too?

Shelton State's goal is \$3000, and we need your help! (Your donations are tax deductible).

You can make donations any time between today and March 3rd. Cash or check is fine.

Contact Lea Green or Margie Falls to donate.

We look forward to you joining the rest of the College in having 100% involvement from the Shelton State family. Remember, everyone has a heart!

SHELTON STATE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

AVAILABLE FOR:
FALL 2008
SPRING 2009
SUMMER 2009

APPLICATION AND SCHOLARSHIP LIST
AVAILABLE AT THE COUNSELING CENTER,
FREDD CAMPUS MAIN OFFICE OR
THE SHELTON STATE FOUNDATION
OFFICE

located in the
Workforce Development Office (RM 1912A)
Questions? Call Debbie Sutton at 391-2298

DEADLINE TO APPLY:

New Journalism meets the old when *Courier* crew visits the APA convention

By Matt Celozzi
Courier Editor

"I can't get no-oo, sat-is-faction..." Damn, it can't be 5 a.m. already. Please God, no. I don't know if I've been up this early since high school. But the too-upbeat-for-pre-dawn sounds of the Rolling Stones were my cue to rise and shine.

As I rolled over and rubbed my eyes and consciousness began to seep in, I remembered why I was arising at this godforsaken time: I and my colleagues from Shelton were going to take one giant leap into the real world of big-time journalism. And not a moment too soon.

I love editing the *Courier*. It's been a learning experience I wouldn't trade for the proverbial anything. But with as much pride we have in what we do, and as seriously as we take it, it's doubtful any Pulitzers will be coming out of Room 2319 anytime soon.

Pulitzer Prizes would be twelve for ten cents at the 137th annual meeting of the Alabama Press Association in Montgomery. Three winners of the coveted crown would be speaking at the Embassy Suites at 9 a.m. and surely there would be something there to grab me and pull me onto the next level. If I could only make it to our state's capital.

I would be joined by fellow Mass Comm. students Keith Huffman, Stephanie James and Meredith Sayers, all prospective journalists, and all contributors to the *Courier*. We took off in the college's mini-bus by 6:45, 15 minutes behind schedule.

But Dr. Jim Kenny, our publisher, teacher, guide and chauffeur-for-the-day, made quick work of Highway 82. I've never seen someone drive so fast without speeding. We pulled into Montgomery by 8:30.

The hotel's lobby was fairly luxurious, with fountains, ponds and a glass-encased elevator that would later be taken for a joyride. We quickly located the check-in area and procured our name tags. Mine read "Matt Celozzi - Shelton State University." Our entire school had just been given a bump in stature. But, hey, why not? This was the big-time.

The entire conference area was a sea of writers, editors, students, educators and various other know-it-alls. They pressed palms, patted backs and shared memories.

Even Dr. Kenny ran into a former student—or at least the student thought so.

At 9 the moderator ushered us

into the conference room and instructed us to take our seats. All of that handshaking and reminiscing caused us to be some of the last ones into the room; the Shelton contingent was relegated to the front row. After a short introduction by the current president of the A.P.A. and some compulsory discussion of the day's itinerary, the first speaker was introduced.

Brett Blackledge from the *Birmingham News* won a 2007 Pulitzer for his investigative reporting on the Alabama two-year college system, and the lions share of his speech revolved around this. A well-spoken yet concise orator, Blackledge discussed the sheer amount of research that goes into a series of that magnitude. He reminded us that he was never an "investigative" journalist. A paper like the *News* rarely employs investigators.

Rather, Blackledge began by doing a simple story about the goings-on in the system when an associate brought him a boxful of documents: employment records, billing statements, contracts, invoices and the like. When he dove in and started digging, the stories started writing themselves. While doing this research, he would go months without a byline, journalist jargon for authoring a story. In a business like newspapers, there's not a lot of room for writers that aren't writing. But his editor encouraged him to persevere and get to the bottom of it.

And get to the bottom of it he did. Blackledge's stories set off a chain-reaction of changes throughout the state that are still being felt and probably will be for some time to come. But what impressed me most about him was the objectivity that he seemed to maintain through the whole ordeal. He felt a sense of duty to find the truth that all real journalists share. And I think it was this attitude that set his reporting apart from the rest and ultimately earned him his Pulitzer.

Without skipping a beat, the moderator introduced the next presenter, Hank Klibanoff, a managing editor at the *Atlanta Journal-*

Constitution. When his resume was read, I instantly perked up. First of all, Klibanoff, an Alabama native, had earned a journalism degree from Northwestern University in Chicago, my home town. But also, I became immediately interested by his being an editor.

Aside from the fact that I'm an "editor" myself, I've always had a mental image of newspaper editors as pretty powerful people. You know the scene: a smoke-filled room, hours from deadline. A



Would-be investigative journalist Keith Huffman gets a few tips from Pulitzer Prize-winning Birmingham News reporter Brett Blackledge.

stressed-out figure with sleeves rolled up, top button undone, leaning forward, palms pressed on an oak conference table, delegating to the reporters around him which direction to take on the big story.

Klibanoff matched this image of mine rather well. Though not a particularly imposing figure physically, he commanded attention through his speaking which was careful and confident. Utilizing an impressive vocabulary and bringing years of experience from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Boston Globe* before his work in Atlanta, he captured my interest right away.

And through all of the style immediately came substance. He shared an anecdote from his early years as a reporter for the Associated Press. He was covering the 1984 Democratic Primary campaign of Jesse Jackson somewhere in the South. As an enterprising reporter, Klibanoff set up what he thought was an interview with the pastor of a rural black Baptist church after a Sunday service.

Making his way out into the country, he arrived at the church in the middle of service. He sat down to listen and wait. An associate of the pastor approached him and asked him if he was a representative of Jesse Jackson's campaign, as they

were expecting one to come and speak to the delegation. Klibanoff was floored. Apparently through some sort of miscommunication, the pastor had understood that this A.P. national correspondent was actually Jackson's campaign manager.

After making some brief remarks to the congregation, Klibanoff found himself with a deadline and no story. Ever enterprising, he left the church and bumped into a young, church-going mother. He had a nice conversation with the potential voter and elicited a few quotes. That could be a story: the views of a typical voter from the South.

He phoned in the story and it made the front page. The lesson was that young journalists must always persevere in search of a story. If one angle falls through, there is always another angle to use, if you can find it. Klibanoff had much advice for rising reporters.

Klibanoff also went on to discuss his book, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation*, for which he received his 2007 Pulitzer for history. He spent 12 years researching newspapers and other press from the Civil Rights era and found that very little coverage was given to the struggle, particularly amongst newspapers in the South. Papers that were otherwise quite progressive and sensitive to contemporary issues were unfairly biased against the Civil Rights movement. His book explores possible reasons for this, though I'm not sure anyone can accurately explain it.

After Klibanoff concluded his speech, the attendees were treated to a break and an opportunity to mingle and meet new people. My young, ever-ambitious colleague, Keith, took this as a much-welcomed opportunity to introduce himself to potential employers and educators. Wielding his resume and a portfolio of clippings, Keith unabashedly approached these professionals with a refusal to fail that I admire.

I mingled a bit and shook a few hands. Mainly I dodged on-comers in the densely packed conference room. Fifteen minutes later, the speeches resumed.

Third on the bill was *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and syndicated columnist Cynthia Tucker. Tucker grew up in Monroeville during the Civil Rights era and attended Auburn. She didn't attend an integrated school until she was a junior in high school. Her childhood gave

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Top Spring Break hotspots other than a cold-hearted beach

By Edwin Martinez

Spring break is all about getting away from school and living the good life for a week. If you look at it spring break has been steadily moved back a little each year making planning an issue. The beach tends to be cold around the months of February and March, but there are many alternatives than going to the beach for spring break.

Sin City, otherwise known as Las Vegas, is a top hot spot for many looking to spice up their vacation.

There are many great deals you can purchase at affordable prices on Hotels.com. This website has affordable flight and hotel packages.

A college student and a friend can stay at The Aruba Hotel and Spa that is located in downtown Las Vegas. The total cost is \$999 for a flight and hotel room package that lasts for six days. That is not bad at all!

The flight from Birmingham to Las Vegas is about five hours. If a visitor wanted to rent an economy car they simply can book it on Hotels.com for a low price of \$18 a day. This would be a perfect package because it is "on the strip" and it is very close to the Bellagio Fountains.

Another affordable package is at the Four Queens Hotel and Casino. This also includes a flight ticket and a room for \$1154. This is also a great hotel because it is downtown, the old Las Vegas.

Many hotels have a package deal where the guest can obtain vouchers for food and shows. "If you have the money to lose, then go to Vegas," said Samantha Glass.

There are many shows that perform nightly for your viewing. Some may cost a price like a performance from the artistic and musical entourage known as the Blue Man Group at The Venetian. There are other complimentary performances that are simply for one's viewing in front of a hotel, such as the Fountains of the Bellagio Hotel with hourly perform-

ances that will excite the human heart.

Los Angeles, the City of Angels, is a beautiful city to visit, especially Hollywood.

Two people can get a plane ticket and a hotel room for only \$1,329 for six days at the Hacienda Hotel.

This hotel provides a 24-hour pick up service that will transport the visitor from the airport to the hotel to get checked in. The flight takes about six hours.

Another fantastic deal, including a plane ticket and hotel room, is at the Comfort Inn LA-Universal. The price is \$1,239 for six days and the location is fabulous because it is in between downtown Los Angeles and Hollywood. Maybe a guest may see a celebrity!

A college student and a buddy would definitely need a ride to get around this beautiful city. That is where an affordable economy car comes to the rescue for only \$24 a day. Once the guests get settled in they should check out Echo Park, located in downtown. It's a beautiful spot that oversees the city and even has paddleboats to rent for an hourly rate. Roscoe's House of Chicken 'n Waffles is a popular restaurant that many of Hollywood's brightest stars come to enjoy a delicious meal.

"You can do a variety of things and never get bored," says student Craig Brown.

If one is in the mood for high velocity skiing and snowboarding definitely go to Breckenridge, Colo. By using Hotwire.com, two guests can indulge in a nice chateau or even at the Holiday Inn Frisco Summit County. This package deal is \$1,430 that is close to a nearby ski lodge. A car rental would be \$37 a day. Copper Mountain and Keystone are great ski lodges to visit and can be booked in advance at ResortQuest.com

With breath-taking scenery views of the Rocky Mountains piercing the skyline one cannot go wrong. "The cuisine is excellent and added with the view it's bloody brilliant," says student Andrew Arrington.

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Simpson, and Melissa Talley.

Carr, a veteran director of many plays, said, "The music and theatre departments will present a selection of musical medleys and solos along with comedic and dramatic scenes. The performance is designed to highlight the talents of Shelton's upcoming student performers." Carr continued, "This production is the most recent collaboration between the various departments housed in the Sandra Ray Fine Arts Center."

Past collaborations have included *Damn Yankees*, *Cinderella* and numerous showcases. "It's rare to see such close collaboration between college performing arts departments," commented Carr, chair of the theatre department. "I attribute the vibrant growth and environment of the Fine Arts Center to this cooperation; every faculty

member shares a passion for education and excellence."

Carr said student productions are consistently presented on the Bean-Brown stage. Over the past few years, the size and technical demands of these shows have been scaled down but Shelton State students, faculty and staff will always have the opportunity to demonstrate their performing talents in their theatre.

Blackshear was asked why the Shelton singers were involved. She said, "Moving frees up the body for singing, and all good singing should generate an emotional response just as musical theatre does."

Carr and Blackshear urge everyone to show their support to these students that have worked so diligently on "Broadway Memories and Melodies."

You will be able to catch these performances, on Feb. 29 at 7:30 p.m. and March 1 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., in the Bean-Brown Theater. There will be no admission or reserved seating.

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her a profound connection to her community and the South in general, and her columns reflect that. After being nominated in '04 and '06, Tucker won her Pulitzer in 2007 for Commentary "for her courageous, clear-headed columns that evince a strong sense of morality and persuasive knowledge of the community."

This connection to the South was the theme of her presentation. She read a column that she wrote in 2005 about Secretary of State and child of Alabama Condoleezza Rice's visit to a Bama-Tennessee football game. Tucker attended the game as well, and she described the moment and its relevance for the state, the South, and how far the nation has come.

She said that, though she would never claim that racism no longer exists, she believes that America has come a long way, and Secretary Rice's accomplishments are proof of this. I would have to agree.

After Tucker's speech, we were once again given a break before lunch to network and meet new people. I spent most of this time getting to better know two of my Shelton colleagues, Meredith and Stephanie. We took an aforementioned joyride on the glass elevator before retiring to the lobby to discuss the conference and our backgrounds.

The announcement of lunch was a welcome one,

as by now, we were all famished. The attendees congregated in the dining room and we sat at a table with a group of students from Tuskegee College. They had announced earlier that they were trying to get their own school newspaper going, and Dr. Kenny gave them some much-appreciated advice, "Sell some ads. Then you can pay for what you need and do what you want."

Following the luncheon, a Q&A session was held in the dining room for the three guest speakers. Earlier in the morning, we were asked to write down questions and some of the better ones would be asked of the journalists. I had written down a question for Klivanoff about the media's coverage of the Iraq War, and, to my surprise, it was one of the few questions presented.

After the Q&A, it was time to head back to

Tuscaloosa. While leaving Montgomery, our navigational skills ebbed a bit and we became "lost." I say "lost" because we didn't know where we were. But it gave us an opportunity to see some of Montgomery's probably lesser-seen neighborhoods, actually a glimpse into the era we had just heard about.

As we rode back up Highway 82, I reflected on the day. We had met some important people. We had heard three Pulitzer Prize winners lecture on journalism. And the four of us had learned a little bit more about each other, and maybe ourselves. I had also left the conference with a renewed sense of ambition towards becoming a journalist.

Thinking about how the day had started, I decided the Rolling Stones song was a false omen.

We arrived home quite "satisfied."



Enjoying their day in Montgomery were (L-R), Courier staffers Stephanie James, Meredith Sayers, Matt Celozzi and Keith Huffman.